CAPITAL and LABOUR.

A Brief Sketch of the

"MAISON LECLAIRE."

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INTRODUCTION.

THE system of Co-partnership in industrial undertakings, as advocated by the Labour Co-partnership Association, appears to be the only practical solution of the social and industrial difficulties caused by the demand of wage-earners for a larger share in the product of their labour.

There can be no panacea for industrial evils, but when this system is intelligently put in practice they tend to disappear; and the success of the "Maison Leclaire" and other similar enterprises justifies a strong hope that as the system extends its influence, industrial evils will be proportionately mitigated.

For many years clear-sighted students of social questions have recognised this probability, and amongst these pioneers of progress none have laboured more assiduously or with greater self-sacrifice to obtain public recognition of the value of co-partnership than the author of this sketch. It must be a subject of deep satisfaction to Miss Hart to feel that the cause with which her name has been so long and so honourably connected has at last secured such widespread and cordial recognition, and that the system of Co-partnership should now be making such vigorous growth.

The special importance of the story, so lucidly told by Miss Hart of the early struggles and the ultimate success of the "Maison Leclaire," lies in the practical demonstration of the fact that the difficulties incidental to the successful establishment of working men's co-partnership associations for production are by no means insuperable.

The growing demand for information upon the subject, which has led the Labour Co-partnership Association to include this pamphlet in the list of its valuable publications, is a welcome sign of Social advance.

June, 1912. ARTHUR CLAY.

A Brief Sketch of the "Maison Leclaire."

(Founded 1827.)

"Biographie d'un Homme Utile" is the modest title given by M. Chas. Robert to his interesting memoir of one of the greatest Frenchmen of this century; the greatest—because he rendered the highest service to humanity; for, at a period when disquietude reigned in France, and M. Louis Blanc was scheming "the organisation of labour," by means of legislation and State intervention, this "useful" man was unobtrusively setting himself to accomplish that end by his own individual effort—exercised too, in the simple discharge of daily *duty*. Both desired to benefit mankind; both sought to redress real evils; the theoretical Socialist failed, because he tried to force reform from *without*, by doing *for* men what could only be accomplished *by* men; the practical Benefactor triumphed, because he was content to sow the good seed, to watch and guard the development of the living principle, and steadily to work on until it reached maturity.

The tomb of this Social Reformer bears the simple epitaph: "Leclaire, Contractor and Decorator; born 1801, died 1872."

But Leclaire's monument must be sought among the living; and in the heart of Paris may be seen the Industrial Partnership he developed growing each year more and more prosperous: the workers inspired by hope, giving thorough honest work; the "*old hands*" not cast off like worn out old tools, but, the days of labour ended, passing the closing years of life in peace and independence.

Edme Jeane Leclaire, the son of a poor village shoemaker, was born at Aisy-sur-Amançon, in the Department of the Yonne, May 14th, 1801. He was taken from the village school at the early age of ten years, when he could scarcely read or write, and for two years earned his living in the fields by taking care of the cattle. From the age of twelve to seventeen he tried a variety of trades, and was by turns a mason and an agricultural labourer; but one day, seeing a party of haymakers start on the barge for Paris, the idea entered into his head that he would join them, and try his fortune in the Capital.

Arrived there, what should he do? As if by chance he stopped at the door of a house-painter, who engaged him as his apprentice, and exacted hard work for his meagre pittance. For wages he had a morsel of bread in the morning, one penny a day to provide his two meals, with supper and a "shakedown" at his master's. For rest and amusement in the evening the only resource open to him

was to jump up behind the hackney coaches. It was a hard life—he suffered much. But the young Leclaire was a character to rise superior to his surroundings. and this negative education, this school of suffering, became his first battle-field, for he learned self-discipline. He did not care to complain, but worked heartily, and conducted himself so well that he further received a franc every fortnight for pocket money. At the end of the first year his master made him a present of £4; at the end of the second £8; and at the end of the third £12 (when he had become foreman), with board and lodging.

At twenty years of age he was a good workman; he knew his worth and demanded of his reluctant master three francs and a half a day, and would keep himself. Out of this first year's earnings, £45, Leclaire managed to lay by £24, a sum sufficient to buy off the risk of being drawn for a soldier. Gifted with exceptionable abilities he understood that he must cultivate them; he borrowed books of his master, bought others, taught himself, and threw off the trammels of ignorance. Married at 22 to a good wife, who shared all his aspirations, dividing his time between the workshop and his own fireside, Leclaire made rapid progress, soon became a decorator, earning six francs, and afterwards eight francs a day.

In 1827, at the age of 26, he set up in business for himself as contractor, painter and glazier, at a little shop in Rue Cassette, at a rent of £12 per annum, with a capital of £40. Two years later, Leclaire undertook his first contract to paint and glaze seven newly-built houses, for the sum of £800, the job to be completed within a given time, under the penalty of a fine. Everybody thought him mad, and told him so, but nothing shook his resolution, and with his first dawn of success, the man who had honestly served a hard master at the lowest possible wages, offered the men who worked for him five francs instead of four francs a day, the rate of wages in Paris at that date.

The workmen knew the character of the man they served, who worked with them and set them such an example of honest labour that the contract was completed within the required time to everybody's satisfaction, Leclaire clearing a net profit of £240. Leclaire's fortune was made, for the excellence and thoroughness of the work attracted the attention of the Paris architects, and in 1834 he was employed on Government buildings and the Bank of France. Social reformers also were attracted to the little shop, and it was to a M. Frégier that Leclaire was indebted for the idea which he ultimately developed with such remarkable judgment. Interested in the working population of large cities, this philanthropist paid Leclaire frequent visits, and in a large work published in 1838, entitled, "The Dangerous Classes in large Cities, with means for improving them," he drew a vivid picture of the good master builder who had trained his men with such rare ability that he had introduced, with perfect good-will, sobriety, thrift, and love of work among them.

But this was not enough for Leclaire, who was constantly pon-

dering the future of his workmen; then, too, he did not try to disguise from himself the fact which distressed him more than all, *viz.*, that in spite of all his efforts a rooted antagonism *did* exist between master and men.

Speaking on this subject one day to M. Frégier, he replied, without realizing the force of his words, that "he saw no solution to that difficulty except in the *participation of the workmen in the profits of the master.*"

This was in the year 1835.

Leclaire did not take much heed at the time; it appeared impracticable, and as he was reading with avidity all the works that he could get hold of on political and social economy, he hoped to find *in them* some practical solution of the problem. Still, the idea had taken root, for with the increasing difficulty he experienced in executing the orders of his business, the words of M. Frégier returned to him five years after they had been uttered; and he perceived all of a sudden that in carrying out that idea he could promote his own interests, and serve the interests of his men at the same time, and it soon appeared the most simple thing possible to put into practice.

The secret of *associated, instead of divided interests*, had taken possession of Leclaire.

This was his calculation. "I asked myself," said Leclaire, "could a workman in our business, by putting more *heart* into his work, produce in the same lapse of time, *i.e.*, a day, a surplus of work equivalent to the value of an hour's pay, *i.e.*, sixpence? Could he besides save twopence halfpenny a day by avoiding all waste of the materials entrusted to him, and by taking greater care of his tools? Everyone would answer that he could. Well then, if a single workman could arrive at the result of realising for the master an additional eightpence halfpenny a day, in 300 working days there would be a gain of £10 4s. 2d. per man, or upwards of £3,000 a year, in a business like Leclaire's, which employed at that time 300 on an average.

Here would be a handsome profit to be shared by his men, and gained as it were out of nothing.

He had firm faith in his calculation, and was prepared for the change, having already a nucleus of good workmen bound together by a Mutual Aid Society, which he had founded two years previously, in 1838. This society, in the outset little more than a benefit club, was destined to become developed into a corporate body representing the workmen's interest in the business, and legally recognised as a sleeping partner. On its foundation, in 1838, the subscription to the society was fixed at two francs a month, which entitled members to sick pay at the rate of two francs a day for the first three months of sickness, and gratuitous medical aid. By the articles of its constitution this club could, if the members so decided, be wound up at the end of 15 years, and the assets if any, be divided.

In 1839 Leclaire had further stimulated the zeal of the workmen

by increased pay; the foremen had been raised two francs, the under foreman half a franc, and all the workmen who had served two years received an extra quarter franc per day.

The next step was to explain his newly formed projects to his workmen, and in June, 1840, Leclaire applied to the Government for permission to hold a meeting, which was granted; 80 or 90 men assembled, and the Prefect of Police testified that all passed off quietly. "The question," said Leclaire, "is simply to give to such of my workmen who deserve this advantage, a share of the profits produced by labour. It is a great work, and those who desire the *end*, must also desire the *means* to that end. The first of these means is that the master shall be the sole judge of the rights of every man. I desire to dispose (or to *speculate*, just as you please) in such a manner that the speculation shall benefit the largest possible number."

The next year was spent by Leclaire in organising his workshops and offices. On February 13th, 1842, he issued a circular to his men, telling them that he was prepared to carry out his scheme on the one condition of strict submission to the rules of the house; reminding them that there must be mutual confidence, and that what he had done in the past ought to assure them about the future. Leclaire again applied to the Government for permission to meet his men *en masse*, but was refused, the proceedings savoured of Socialism, and the good man was suspected of tampering with his workmen. The ill-will displayed by the Government did not distress him, but the painful thing to Leclaire was, that some of his own workmen mistrusted him. Excited by articles in a weekly journal, which accused Leclaire of manœuvring to bring down wages, the incredulous men demanded whether the promised bonus would be really *paid*, or whether it was not all a hoax. Leclaire soon settled that question; for although the promised *participation* was not due till January, 1843, when the profits of 1842 had been calculated, he called his best men together, poured a bag of gold upon the table and proceeded to divide the profits of the previous year, £475, among the 44 men entitled to participate, or an average of £10 a man. This stroke worked wonders; for who could now doubt his sincerity. Leclaire was soon able to verify the truth of his calculation—at the end of the year £490 was divided among the same 44 men; in 1844 the number had increased to 82 men, who had proved themselves entitled to participate in the £788 that fell to their share of the profits, thus shewing a rapid advance, which continued with remarkable steadiness.

In 1853, fifteen years after the establishment of the Mutual Aid Society, it was, in conformity with the rules of its constitution, dissolved, each of the 29 surviving members receiving £21 15s. as his share of the assets. *This* was not Leclaire's intention; the funds scattered at the very time that the old and worn-out men needed them more than ever. Leclaire resolved to take the matter into his own hands, and the following year the Society was estab-

lished for another period of 15 years, on an entirely new basis. Henceforth there was to be no monthly subscription; the society was to derive its capital from a sum annually granted to it by Leclaire "benevolently out of the profits of the business; and in six years a capital of £1,600 had accumulated.

Leclaire now became convinced that it was a mistake to have left it optional with the members to wind up the society and divide the assets in 1869, as such a division entirely precluded the possibility of providing fixed retiring pensions for the sick and aged. He had now to face determined opposition, and even Leclaire found it no easy task to get the members to consent to give up their right to this prospective division, which they reckoned would mean cash amounting to £50 or £60 a-piece, if there were 80 members of the society.

Threatening to withhold any further subscriptions out of the profits of the business, he compelled the men to yield, seeing so clearly that it was to their interest and that of their families that they should. Having carried his point, Leclaire thus addressed his men:—"I congratulate you on your determination, and I thank you for the confidence you repose in me. Since the beginning of our acquaintance, I have had much to contend with. Our ideas have seldom agreed, and the reason of this is quite simple. Each of you thinks only of his *own* advantage, whilst I consider that of *all*. Let us confess it honestly; it is only a blind selfishness which can prefer a miserable division of the accumulated capital to a fund for providing a retiring pension. These pensions, by doing away with the antipathy between master and workmen, create stability and harmony in the workshop. If I may judge from some of the opinions you have expressed, you have been pre-occupied with the idea that when once death has separated me from you, all will be at an end; that disunion will enter among my associates; that the house of Leclaire will be dismembered; that each of my associates will want his share of the spoil, and that your Mutual Aid Society will disappear. I am by no means of this opinion. My associates are upright men, who will make it a point of honor to perpetuate a monument they have helped me to raise. Gentlemen, if one desires the end of a thing, one must also desire the means to that end. If in a short time it is not proved that the Society will continue after my death, there remains nothing for me but to abandon the struggle, for if physical and intellectual force can be exhausted, courage, too, has its limits."

Three years after this little battle with the workmen, Leclaire, to shew his disinterestedness and appreciation of the men's yielding, made the capital of the Society up to £4,000, and on the 29th July, 1863, by deed formally enrolled the name of the Mutual Aid Society as a sleeping partner in the business, thus associating the members in a corporate capacity in the partnership. From this date the Society, like the other partners, received 5 per cent. interest on its invested capital whilst it was allotted 20 per cent. of the annual

profits, 30 per cent. being divided amongst the workmen individually in proportion to wages earned. The remaining half of the profits were at this time shared by Leclaire and his partner, M. Defournaux, a son of one of the foremen, who had served his apprenticeship in the house, and had been taken into partnership in 1853.

In handing over these new statutes in 1864, Leclaire thus addressed his workmen :—"As members of the Mutual Aid Society, you are no longer day labourers, working like machines, leaving off work when the hour has done striking. You are partners working on your own account, and, as such, nothing in the workshop can be indifferent to you. Every one of you ought to look after the plant and the materials as if you had been specially appointed guardians of them." And he concluded with these words :—"If you wish that I should leave this world with a contented heart, it is necessary that you should have realised the dream of my *whole* life; it is necessary that after regular conduct and assiduous labour, a workman and his wife should, in their old age have the wherewithal to live in peace without being a burden on *anyone*."

The year following, Leclaire, who had already devolved the greater part of his duties on M. Defournaux, retired to a small country house at Herblay, a village near Paris, with the avowed intention of accustoming his young institution to walk alone; his aim had been from the first to prepare the way for his own disappearance; he could not bear to think that the prosperity of the house should depend upon his presence and influence.

A few months later another and a sadder motive weighed with him, as he had the misfortune to lose his beloved wife, with whom he had enjoyed forty-two years of happiness, and who had shared every aspiration of his heart. He no longer cared to live in the solitary house, and sought distraction from his sorrow in the quiet charms of the country, which he dearly loved. Leclaire knew full well the attractions that his institution would have for him, so he wrote to M. Defournaux, "Every time that you see me in Paris, say to me, 'What are you come here for? we don't want you; you forget that you are sixty-five years of age, and that it is indispensable that we should learn to go on without you." In 1866 Leclaire gave up his post of President of the Mutual Aid Society, and was succeeded by M. Charles Robert, well known in Paris for his devotion to every form of social progress. Leclaire's country life was destined to be anything but one of repose. The office of Mayor was thrust upon him, and for three years he devoted himself to every conceiveable work of village reform. One grand reform that lay very near his heart he failed to accomplish; it was this—he could not persuade the peasants to apply his cherished principle of association to the cultivation of the village territory. This territory, containing less than 3,000 acres, was divided into 23,000 plots, cultivated by 675 individuals. Notwithstanding the manifest waste of such a division of the land, the peasants obstinately refused to adopt Leclaire's scheme of cultivation in common.

During these years the "Maison Leclaire" had been flourishing under M. Defournaux's management; the absent master had been forming new projects; and in the month of January, 1869, the firm underwent entire modification. Before proceeding, Leclaire instituted an enquiry among his workmen by circulating a set of a dozen printed questions, remarking, by way of preface—"These modifications ought to be made with the co-operation of all interested; then, *both* sides having contributed to the establishment of the common Charter, each one will respect it, and will behave so as to secure constantly unity of action in carrying it out." Among the twelve points put by Leclaire, with full liberty for each man to introduce others, we find the following: Creation of a council of discipline; nominating the foremen; question of inequality of salaries; conditions to be fulfilled to become an individual sharer in the profits; advantages to be granted to non-associates—control of the accounts and deeds."

About 200 written answers were sent in by the workmen, these were carefully analysed and reported on by a committee appointed for the purpose. The final scheme proposed by Leclaire, which was based upon the recommendations of this committee, received the approval of the workmen assembled in general meeting, and on January 6th, 1869, became the binding Charter of the firm. The working capital was now fixed at £16,000, of which Leclaire contributed £4,000, M. Defournaux, £4,000, and the Mutual Aid Society, representing the workmen's interest, £8,000.

There was also a Reserve Fund of £4,000, which could be drawn upon in case of emergency. The firm became by this charter a "Sociétè en Comandite," *i.e.*, a partnership in which the acting partners are responsible without limitation, and the dormant ones to the extent of their capital only. From this date Leclaire ceased to appropriate any part of the profits—only 5 per cent. interest on his invested capital.

At the present time the two managing partners draw a salary of £240 each for superintendence. Interest at 5 per cent. is paid to them and to the Mutual Aid Society on their respective capital. Of the net profits, one quarter goes to the two managing partners jointly, the senior partner taking two-thirds, the junior one-third; one quarter goes to the Mutual Aid Society; the remaining half is divided among the workmen and others employed by the firm in exact proportion to wages earned. During the last five years these bonuses have averaged 18 per cent.

The Mutual Aid Society confers the following advantages, besides performing all the functions of an ordinary benefit club: it bestows a retiring life pension of £48 per annum on every member who has attained the age of fifty, and has worked twenty years for the firm, and it continues the payment of half this annuity to the widow of such pensioner during her life. Previous to 1875 these life pensions were £32 per annum, they were then raised to £40, and again in 1880 increased to £48 per annum.

It insures the life of every member for the sum of £40, to be handed over to his family at his death; and further, if a worker, though he be neither a member of the society, or on the list of those permanently employed by the firm, meet, whilst engaged in its service, with a disabling accident, he becomes at once entitled to the full retiring life pension of £48, and if the accident terminate fatally, the widow retains half the pension.

But the principle of "participation" with Leclaire had for its end a great deal more than "sharing profits:" it meant likewise "sharing responsibilities;" it meant besides material welfare, the moral and social "uplifting" of the wage-earning class, and he brought the principle into operation in such a manner as to constitute the education of all who came into contact with it.

To attain this end, Leclaire instituted a governing body, which he called the "Noyau," *i.e.*, the nucleus or kernel, which has now become the moving spirit of the whole body. To be eligible for admission, a workman must be in the prime of life, between the age of twenty-five and forty, of unblemished moral charactar, and a skilled workman.

Applications for admission are addressed to the "Court of Conciliation," and reported on by this committee to the general assembly of the "Noyau."

The "Court of Conciliation" is elected by the general assembly of the "Noyau." It consists of five workmen and three clerks, under the presidency of one of the managing partners. This committee constitutes a moral tribunal, before it are brought cases of misconduct or insubordination; the offenders receive advice and warning in the first instance, and if these are neglected, the committee is empowered to sentence them to suspension from employment by the firm for one, two, or three months, or even dismissal.

At the Annual Meeting of the General Assembly of the "Noyau," the foremen are elected, and to show the complete confidence Leclaire reposed in the good sense of the men, on the death or resignation of a partner, his successor is elected by this body of workmen.

The powers of this body stop here, the executive being entirely in the hands of the two managing partners.

By thus opening wide the door of the future to any latent talent in the house, Leclaire sought to better the condition of *all*, and to put into practice the maxim of S. Simon, which inspired him, "To every man according to his capacity; to every capacity according to the work done."

In order to render possible the election of the best qualified man as managing partner, it is provided in the Charter that on the occurrence of a vacancy, the capital of the outgoing partner, *i.e.*, £4,000, shall not be compulsorily withdrawn until his successor shall be able to replace it out of the profits due to him from the date of his appointment. M. Robert asserts that after his long experience of the proceedings of the "Noyau," he considers the

appointments made by that body to have been uniformly *good*, and to have justified the entire confidence reposed in it by Leclaire. Both the present partners, M. Redouly and M. Marquot, have been thus elected, as M. Defournaux only survived Leclaire three years.

The number of members who compose the "Noyau" is now 130—of these 103 are workmen, and the remaining 27 clerks. In reply to inquiries which I made of M. Robert concerning the number of unworthy appearances in the course of a year before the "Court of Conciliation," I was furnished with the following facts: From the 21st February, 1879, to July 23rd, 1880, there were but *six* cases of delinquency; two grave offences were punished with dismissal, and of the remaining four cases one received a warning, two were suspended respectively for 5 and 15 days, and the fourth for 18 months. Appended to the report is the following note:—"*We have had no case of drunkenness for several years.*" This, be it borne in mind, in a firm which employs over 1,100 workers.

The conditions for admission to the Mutual Aid Society are—membership of the "Noyau," five years work for the house, good conduct, and freedom from chronic disease. The administration is in the hands of a "conseil de famille," consisting of a president, six officers annually elected by the whole of the members, and 12 visitors chosen by yearly turns from the roll of the society. It is the duty of the latter to visit the sick during their year of office. The allowance during sickness was increased in 1881 from 14s. to £1 a week, in addition to medical aid. The "family council" regulates the admission of new members to the Society, the administration of aid during sickness, and at death, also the assignment and payment of pensions, life insurance, &c. It also causes the books of the firm to be annually inspected.

The members of the Mutual Aid Society number 103, it has at present 44 pensioners, 10 of whom are widows.

These are the chief points of the Charter signed by Leclaire, Defournaux, and M. Chas. Robert, as president of the Mutual Aid Society, in the presence of the assembled workmen, January 6th, 1869. On this occasion Leclaire recalled the advice he had given—the desires and hopes that had animated him in 1864: adding—"To-day, I may say, on all sides there is agitation; everywhere people are busy with social improvements. Turn a deaf ear—let us occupy ourselves with activity and perseverance in perfecting our organisation; it has received the baptism of time; it rests upon a sure foundation. The growth and development of our work has become an object of public attention both at home and abroad; it has received the approbation of illustrious personages. This approbation imposes on all of us heavier duties.

"It is not enough that antagonism between employer and employed has died out between us; it is not enough that the *cause* of strikes has disappeared amongst us. The sentiments of brotherhood must be more and more manifest; our courtesy and *savoir vivre*, even in our most intimate relations, ought to express those

feelings; we must on every occasion so conduct ourselves as to raise our moral level to the proportion of the grand work we are doing."

The brave old man, who from his youth hated war and bloodshed, lived to see his institution safely through the perilous months of the Franco-German War, staying at Herblay during the occupation of the Germans, but returning to the Capital at the outbreak of the Commune. "For," said he, "if Paris is blown up, I will be buried in its ruins with my workmen."

Leclaire died at Herblay, July 13th, 1872, aged 71, happy in the consciousness of having carried out all the dreams of his youth, and the assurance that bread was secured to those who had grown old with him. The last pleasure of his life was to know that the sum of £2,000 had, the week before, been paid over and above wages to 600 of his men, and that the conduct of all was exemplary.

On his death bed he sent the following message to his workmen:—"Tell them that, on leaving this world, I exhort them to remember constantly that, in working for the business, they not only work to improve their *own* condition, but that they also set a good example, and that this reflection ought to be an incessant encouragement to them to do their duty *thoroughly*, since by so doing they contribute to the enfranchisement of those who have nothing but their labour to live by."

Leclaire left a fortune of £48,000, and had divided among his men, individually and collectively, £44,000; he constantly insisted that his conduct had been for his own advantage, and that it was better for him to earn a hundred francs and give fifty of them to his workmen, than to earn only twenty-five francs and keep them all for himself. "I maintain," he wrote, in 1865, "that if I had remained in the beaten track of routine, I should not have arrived, *even by fraudulent means*, at a position comparable to that which I have made for myself."

Leclaire proved to his *own* satisfaction, that enlightened self-interest can be attained only by the path of self-sacrifice. The spring of all his actions is revealed in these words, which are contained in his will—"I believe in the God who has written in our hearts the law of duty, the law of progress, the law of the sacrifice of one's-self for others. I am the humble disciple of Him Who has told us to do unto others as we would have others do unto us, and to love our neighbour as ourselves. It is in this sense that I desire to remain a Christian unto my last breath."

He left directions to be buried with the same simplicity as the members of the Mutual Aid Society, and was followed to his grave by his six hundred workmen.

Thus Leclaire removed the antagonism between Capital and Labour, by converting the very antagonist into the bond of union between master and men; by making the Wealth created by Labour the Servant of all, blessing alike Employer and Employed. What marvel that the hearts of the people blessed him as the true ruler of his people? Was he not also happy in the consciousness that God

above, instead of Mammon below, was blessing him?

Resting on a sure foundation, the "Maison Leclaire" grows each year more and more prosperous, so that, eight years after the death of its founder, the amount of business done was exactly doubled. The annexed table will show the share of profits paid over to the workers individually and collectively during the last five years; the figures bear sufficient evidence of the continued prosperity and vitality of the firm.

Years.	Participation of Profits.			Wages.	Proportion of Profits to Wages. Paid.
	Mutual Aid Society.	Bonus to Labour.	Total.		
From 1842 to 1876 inclusive	Frs.	Frs.	Frs. 1,750,017	Frs.	Frs.
1877	57,000	115 000	172 500	615,484	17. 81 %
1878	65,500	130,000	195,000	713,644	18.216 %
1879	80,000	160,000	240,000	867,870	18.435 %
1880	95,000	190,000	285,000	972,424	19. 53 %
1881	107,500	215,000	322,500	1,068,607	20. 11 %
			2,965,017		

It will be seen from the above, that the sum paid over in bonuses to the men amounted last year to £8,600, while the Mutual Aid Society was allotted £4,300 as its share of the profits, the two managing partners jointly receiving the remaining quarter, *i.e.*, £4,300, as their share.

The whole amount paid over to the workers since 1842, when Leclaire first divided his £475 among his 44 men, now reaches the considerable sum of £118,600.

The capital of the Mutual Aid Society now amounts to £56,500. Of this sum, £20,000 is voluntarily invested in the Firm, at 5 per cent. interest, in addition to the £8,000 which, by the Charter of the house, is obligatory. The remainder of the capital is invested in State securities.

Such is the present condition of the "Maison Leclaire." What thoughtful man can fail to admire the grand proportions, the perfect symmetry of this living monument of the large-hearted, the clear-headed, and the far-seeing Frenchman? And its foundation stone? A dream—"It has been the dream of my life," said Leclaire, "that a workman and his wife should, in their old age, have the wherewithal to live in peace without being a burden upon anyone." A dream, inspired by One Who ever liveth to fulfil such dreams—the dream in truth of *emancipated labour*, the Gospel too of *associated labour*. It has for its end *not* the impoverishment of the rich, but the enrichment of the poor—"There is that scattereth and yet increaseth; there is that withholdeth more than is meet and it tendeth to poverty."

Let the reader ponder this truth:—that the *end* achieved by Leclaire was *the extinction of pauperism with its attendant evils;* that the *only means to attain that end* is, as he has shown us, the application of the principle of

CO-PARTNERSHIP

between Employer and Employed, developed in the spirit of "love one another;" and thereby—

Transforming portionless workers into working proprietors.

"What one is,
"Why may not millions be?"

MARY H. HART.

Xmas., 1882.

APPENDIX.

After the lapse of a quarter of a century it will be interesting to note the present position of the Mutual Aid Society, which is the sleeping partner of the Firm, and which provides the Old Age Pensions.

I learn from the French Economic Section in the Franco-British Exhibition that on Jan. 1st, 1908, the Capital of the Society amounted to £140,480.

Every Associate at 50 years of age who has worked 20 years for the Firm, is entitled for life to a yearly pension of £60. The widows and orphans of such Associates retain half the pension.

Any workman incapacitated from work in the service of the Firm, is entitled to the like pension.

Every Employé can obtain at the age of 55 an annual grant equal to two thirds of the pension drawn by Associates, *viz.:* £40 per annum, and his widow retains half that sum.

In 1911 the sum of £9,200 was paid out of the funds to 220 Annuitants.

On Feb. 22nd, 1895, the Municipality of Paris honoured the memory of Leclaire by giving his name to a street in the neighbourhood of the Firm, and the following year, to testify their gratitude to their Founder, the Employés erected a statue in an adjacent square. This gratifying tribute to the memory of the great Captain of Industry was inaugurated on Nov. 1st, 1896, in the presence of members of the Government and representatives of every class of social reformers.

It is true that in France over a hundred Firms have followed in the steps of the great Pioneer; but those who are able to realise all that it must have cost him to develope his "Idea" more than half a century ago, will never grudge the honour that is due to the memory of the far-seeing Frenchman,

EDME JEAN LECLAIRE.

June, 1912. M. H. H.

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